

PHIL 2405A: Philosophy of the Paranormal
Course Outline
Late Summer 2021

Class Information

Dates: Asynchronous, two lectures per week

Time: N/A

Location: N/A

Course prerequisites: One course in philosophy or second year standing.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Josh Redstone

E-mail: josh.redstone@carleton.ca

Course Description

In this class we will critically examine claims, concepts and theories related to the paranormal, i.e. phenomena which purportedly lie outside of the realm of everyday experience and/or scientific explanation. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will examine the scientific character of purported paranormal phenomena, in addition to their relation to philosophical questions surrounding human nature, thought, perception and reality. Such phenomena will include those typically studied by parapsychologists such as ESP, Telepathy and Psychokinesis. From there, we'll move onto other phenomena that are sometimes categorized as paranormal such as UFOs, Astrology, dreams, etc.

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be provided via cuLearn.

Accessing Course Resources

Important course material will be available on cuLearn: <https://carleton.ca/culearn/>

Here you will find this course outline, lecture schedule, PowerPoint slides or notes that accompany the lectures, and other supplementary materials that will be made available as we proceed through this course. You will also find the discussion forums, which are a great way for you to ask questions about the course material, share and discuss your own ideas, organize study groups for your tests, and so forth.

Lectures will be posted to my YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBOvpBTtLsP7MMjqOZO67Dg>

Since we will not be meeting in person, I highly recommend that everyone watches the lectures I've prepared. Here, I will explain and elucidate key ideas from our readings. Students can ask questions in the video comments section, or in the discussion board on cuLearn.

Office hours will be held virtually using my Discord Server, which you can join by following this link: <https://discord.gg/NbrGNuD>

Office hours will be held by appointment/as needed. Please don't be shy! I encourage everyone to request an appointment for a virtual meeting at any time if they have any questions or concerns.

Evaluation

Item	Percent of Grade	Due Date
Critical Response 1	12.5%	Jul. 12
Critical Response 2	12.5%	Jul. 19
Special Topics Suggestion	5%	Jul. 26
Essay Topic Proposal	12.5%	Jul. 31
Critical Response 3	12.5%	Aug. 3
Final Essay	45%	August 25
TOTAL	100%	---

Lecture Schedule: Note, this schedule may be subject to minor adjustments.

Date	Lecture Topic
Week 1 (Week of Jul. 5)	Lecture 1: Intro & Course Outline Lecture 2: Parapsychology and the Paranormal
Week 2 (Week of Jul. 12)	Lecture 3: Extra-Sensory Perception and Psychokinesis Lecture 4: Ghosts; or, Talking to the Dead
Week 3 (Week of Jul. 19)	Lecture 5: Dreams and Out of Body Experiences Lecture 6: Beyond Parapsychology – Anomalistic Psychology
Week 4 (Week of Jul. 26)	Lecture 7: UFOs and Ancient Aliens Lecture 8: Astrology and Horoscopes
Week 5 (Week of Aug. 2)	Lecture 9: The Uncanny: Part 1 Lecture 10: The Uncanny: Part 2
Week 6 (Week of Aug. 9)	Lecture 11: Special Topics Lecture 12: Special Topics

Critical Responses

In this course you will complete *three* critical responses, each worth 12.5% of your grade. Each response should be approx. 750 words in length, and any works or ideas referenced must be properly cited. I will discuss how to do this during our introductory lecture.

For these critical responses, your task is to identify an interesting idea from the previous week's lectures and engage with it. This idea might concern a purported paranormal phenomenon, the thinkers whose work we shall be reading, a study or an experiment that we discuss, etc. Your critical response will be due at the start of the week *after* the material has been lectured on. For example, your first critical response is due July 12, but will concern material covered in lectures 1 and 2 rather than in 3 and 4.

Note: All critical responses are to be submitted in MS Word (.doc) format!

Special Topics Lectures

We will approach the paranormal from a variety of perspectives throughout this course (philosophical, psychological, etc.). We will encounter many interesting purported paranormal phenomena along the way, but we will not have time to talk about *everything* that might count as paranormal. So, the particular topics of these lectures will be chosen by the students. These lectures will serve as a chance to dive a little deeper into some of the interesting ideas we encounter throughout the class, or to talk about something I have not yet lectured on. Each of you will submit a suggestion for a special topics lecture via cuLearn (worth 5% of your grade). I will then create a poll which everyone can use to vote for their favorite topics. I will lecture on the two most popular topics.

Tests and Examinations

There are no tests in this class! However, your final essay serves as a final take-home exam.

Final Essay

In this class you will complete a research essay, which is to be handed in via cuLearn on the last day of class (August 25 at 11:59 pm). It is worth 45% of your final grade.

You must also propose a topic for your essay. Your topic proposal should be 2-3 paragraphs, and it should clearly state the topic of your research paper and ideas about what you will argue. It should also include a preliminary bibliography for your paper. This way, I can give you all a bit of feedback before you complete your essay (in terms of the topic you choose and the argument you wish to make). Your topic proposal is worth 12.5% of your final grade and is due to be submitted via cuLearn on July 31 at 11:59 pm.

Note: Your Essay Topic Proposal and your Final Essay are to be submitted in MS Word (.doc) format!

Assignment Deferral Policy

Students who are unable to complete a test or an assignment may ask for a deferral only under two conditions: illness or bereavement. Should you miss a test for these reasons, you must contact me by email within 24 hours of missing the test/assignment due date to request a deferral and arrange to provide me with the appropriate documentation (e.g. doctor's note, etc.).

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence, which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor (me). The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They range from a mark of zero for the plagiarized work to a final grade of "F" for the course, and even suspension from all studies or expulsion from the University.

Grading System

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 B = 73-76 C - = 60-62

A = 85-89 B - = 70-72 D+ = 57-59

A - = 80-84 C+ = 67-69 D = 53-56

B+ = 77-79 C = 63-66 D - = 50-52

F Failure. No academic credit

DEF Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term.

Further details can be found on the next page.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 2021)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the [Equity Services website](#).
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

May 6	Classes start.	July 1	Statutory holiday, University closed.
May 13	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>early</u> summer courses.	July 2	Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.
May 20	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>full</u> summer courses.	July 9	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>late</u> summer courses.
May 21	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from <u>early</u> and <u>full</u> summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.	July 23	Last day to withdraw from <u>late</u> summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
May 24	Statutory holiday, University closed.	Aug. 2	Civic holiday, University closed.
June 11	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>early</u> summer courses before the official examination period.	Aug. 9	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>late</u> summer and <u>full</u> summer courses before the official examination period.
June 18	Last day for <u>early</u> summer classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline. Last day for academic withdrawal from <u>early</u> summer courses.	Aug. 16	Last day of <u>late</u> and <u>full</u> summer term classes. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline. Last day for academic withdrawal from <u>late</u> summer and <u>full</u> summer courses.
June 19-20	No classes or examinations take place.	Aug. 17-18	No classes or examinations take place.
June 21-27	Final examinations.	Aug. 19-25	Final examinations.
June 27	Take-home examinations for <u>early</u> summer courses are due.	Aug. 25	Take-home examinations for <u>late</u> or <u>full</u> summer courses are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735